

TITANIC PROJECT TO GIVE CITY A RIVER.

Thirty Thousand Inches of Water to be Brought to Los Angeles.

Options Secured on Forty Miles of River Frontage in Inyo County—Magnificent Stream to be Conveyed Down to the Southland in Conduit Two Hundred and Forty Miles Long—Stupendous Deal Closed.

INDEPENDENCE (Cal.) July 28.—[Exclusive Dispatch.] Agents representing Los Angeles city have secured options on about forty miles of frontage on the Owens River north of Owens Lake. Fred Eaton, ex-Mayor of Los Angeles, and the superintendent of the Los Angeles water works were in the valley in an automobile the early part of this week. Two days ago they closed the last outstanding options. The price paid for many of the ranches is three or four times what the owners ever expected to sell them for. Everybody in the valley has money, and everyone is happy.

Three months ago Eaton bought the holdings of the Rickey Cattle Company, comprising about 50,000 acres of water-bearing land. It was then thought that Eaton was going into the stock-raising business here, but it has since been learned that he was securing options for Los Angeles city. Eaton has made every option solid and secured all the land the city wanted. The deal is riveted.

THE cable that has held the San Fernando Valley vacant for ten centuries to the arid desert is about to be severed by the magic scimitar of modern engineering skill. Back to the headwaters of the Los Angeles River will be turned the flow of a thousand mountain streams that ages ago were tributaries of the current that swept past the site of the ancient pueblo of Los Angeles to the ocean.

The desert has yielded up its wealth. The problem of Los Angeles' water supply has been solved for the next hundred years.

Thirty thousand inches of the purest snow water is to be taken from the bed of the Owens River in Inyo county, right in the heart of the Sierra Nevada Mountains and conveyed for a distance of 240 miles over arid plains and through the heart of mountain ranges to be emptied into mighty reservoirs at the headwaters of the Los Angeles water system.

Already the United States government has given its consent; the route has been surveyed and the water-bearing land has been purchased outright by the Los Angeles Water Commissioners. The last options marking the success of the negotiations have been closed.

By a pledged expenditure that will aggregate \$1,000,000, the Los Angeles water department has obtained possession of all the water rights that will give the city a supply equal to at least ten times the flow of the Los Angeles River.

The enterprise is one of titanic proportions; the reality transcends the flights of imagination.

The engineers say that a few centuries ago Owens River was a tributary to the Los Angeles River; that a mighty earthquake threw mountain ranges against the river bed, making the stream tributary to a salt lake, and that they have evolved a feasible plan for tunneling these mountains and bringing the water again into the San Fernando Valley.

ENORMOUS SUPPLY.

Not only will the water be sufficient for the domestic needs of Los Angeles, even though our population increase to a couple of millions, but there will be a surplus sufficient to supply Pasadena, Long Beach, Santa Monica and half a dozen other suburban cities.

For four years we must wait; it will require that length of time to bore the thirty miles of tunnels through the mountain ranges.

Then will Los Angeles county indeed become the Promised Land. More precious than milk and honey will be the flow of the pure mountain water—aye, more precious than gold and diamonds.

It means the regeneration of the San Fernando Valley. No longer will it be necessary for the city to deprive the struggling ranchers of the waters of the Los Angeles River. It will be possible for them to devote the entire flow of the river to agriculture.

Once this water was deemed so precious that the right of the city to its use was challenged and fought through the Supreme Court of the United States.

A DOZEN STREAMS.

Now the Water Commissioners hold options on the flow of a dozen streams, each of which is considerably larger than the Los Angeles River. The mean amount of water taken from the river at any one time is 3000 inches. A number of the tributaries to the Owens River flow from five to eight thousand inches.

The flow of the Los Angeles river has been valued at \$25,000,000. Only last week the department water commissioners bought a stream flowing over 5000 inches for \$1,000.

"Truly the Lord has been good to Southern California," said Mayor McAleer when, after three days' desert travel, he stood in the shadow of Mt. Whitney and viewed for the first time the new source of Los Angeles' water supply.

Working in secret, bound by a pledge which, through all the months of preliminary surveys and negotiations involving options on more than 100,000 acres of land, has never been broken, the officials of the water department have paved the way for the consummation of the greatest scheme for water development ever attempted on the American continent.

THE LAND DEAL.

In order that this development might be made possible it was necessary to buy outright all the private land in the

area, which has been secured by Mr. Eaton himself.

An engineer himself, Mr. Eaton ob-

served during a number of trips to his son's ranch near Independence, the peculiar formation of the land along the route of the wagon road from Mojave to the Owens River Valley.

The engineers now all agree on what he first surmised: that waters of the Owens River centuries ago flowed down through the arid valley from what is now Owens Lake, passing near the present site of Mojave and finally emptying into the Los Angeles in the San Fernando Valley.

Areas of mighty alluvium delineated the ribs of a number of the lesser Sierras, throwing mountains across the path of the stream and for ten centuries, at least, the river has been emptied into Owens Lake.

This lake is a great stretch of water ten miles wide and thirty miles long. It is interminably populated with soda that it contains in its depths.

The engineers contemplate cutting through the mountains that block the path of the river and bringing a canal from Charley's Butte, a foothill midway between Independence and Lone Pine, by way of Mojave to Los Angeles.

All the plans have been approved by the government engineers.

By expending about \$100,000 in cash for options and by guaranteeing the payment of over \$700,000 more, the Water Commissioners have pledged the city to build this conduit.

Ex-Mayor Eaton has acted as the city's agent in all the negotiations. The farmer folk in the Owens River Valley think that he has gone daffy on stock raising, for to them he is a millionaire with a fad.

INDEPENDENCE SACRIFICED.

It is the village of Independence that will probably be hardest hit. The town is kept alive partly by the trade of the ranchers in the valley, and partly by the travel to and from the gold fields of Western Nevada. The trail to Goldfield and Bullfrog passes through Independence. It is one of the star stations on the route.

A number of the unsuspecting ranchers have regarded the appearance of

the tales of the time when the Southern Pacific built its first line into Los Angeles, the time when the Chinamen on the work quit because they could make more money washing gold in their shovels.

U. S. GOVERNMENT CONCESSIONS

United States Engineer J. B. Lippincott

heretofore

other par.

Thirty thousand inches of water means more to Los Angeles than all the gold hidden away in the California mountains.

LAST SPIKE IN, DEAL CLOSED.

SUPT. MULHOLLAND BRINGS THE GLAD TIDINGS.

Says Options are Fixed and Los Angeles Becomes Owner of Thirty Thousand Inches of Purest Snow Water—Would Give All the Credit to Others.

Scorched and browned by the almost intolerable desert wind and sun, Superintendent Mulholland returned yesterday afternoon from a daring nine days' automobile trip into the heart of the Owens River country, bearing the glad tidings that "The last spike has been driven; the options are all secured; the deal by which Los Angeles city becomes the owner of thirty thousand inches of the purest snow water has been nailed."

In the excited gratification born of a knowledge that the vexed water question has at last been solved, Mulholland laughed like a schoolboy.

"Fred Eaton did it. He has been working on it for thirteen years. He is the greatest natural engineer that the West has ever known. He has made possible for us to accomplish the greatest scheme of water development ever attempted in this country."

What Mulholland did not say was that it was himself that made it possible for Eaton to finance his scheme; that he has made five trips on foot

to the Owens River valley.

INDEPENDENCE DARING IN GETTING OPTIONS.

IT WAS the very daring of the proposal to buy an entire valley, the most valuable in Inyo county, and turn it over to the city for the water rights involved that has made the negotiations a success.

Water rumors have been so frequent and so false in the Sierra country that mention of the possibility that Los Angeles would go so far for its water supply was regarded by the ranchers as bar-room gossip.

It was like the pernicious discovery of the Peg Leg mine, something that happens once a month, and yet never occurs.

The chief difficulty encountered was from the Los Angeles end. A municipal enterprise is always considered the lawful prey of a small army of petty grafters. There are a thousand of them here who would have considered it a sharp stroke of business to slide up into the Owens Lake country and secure a few options in advance of Mr. Eaton, to turn them over to the public.

That the purchases have been made without the necessity of buying a single option from other than the owner reflects great credit on all parties concerned.

The first \$50,000 was expended after the trip made by the Mayor, the City Attorney and Water Commissioners Fay and Elliott. It was a heart-breaking trip that came near costing Mr. Elliott his life.

This party went into the valley ostensibly for the purpose of inspecting Mt. Whitney with a view to forming a company and advertising the place as a great summer resort.

This was the story agreed to by the party when they left Mojave. But it came much nearer to the truth than they then imagined. When the party got to the foot of the mountain, arriving just in time for a view of a sunset on Mt. Whitney, they came near forgetting the real object of their mission.

"It was the grandest sunset I ever witnessed; the Alps are no more to be compared to it than a sandhill to Old Baldy. That little frontier village clinging to the mountain side will one day become the most famous mountain resort on the continent."

This is the statement of one staid commissioner, made four weeks after the visit.

This little resort is on the western skirts of the Sierras. From there the water flows into the Kern River, and into the San Joaquin Valley country.

At Mt. Whitney they passed over to the eastern slope of the Sierras, and were soon in Owens Lake country.

There the party opened a trail tracing a number of the mountain streams to their sources; even ascending some of the lesser Sierras.

two days ago the streams were flowing over 30,000 inches of water. This, too, in the season when we need the water most. In that we are peculiarly fortunate.

The streams are highest there in June, July and August. Those are the months when we need the water most. But in the fall the flow of these streams for the year round during the last five years has been 25,000 inches.

That means about 325,000,000 gallons of water a day.

"By the purchase of the land we have secured the riparian rights to every inch of that water. It is enough to irrigate almost half the arid but otherwise arable land in Los Angeles county."

"Complete surveys of the route by which the water will be brought into the San Fernando Valley have been made. My men have been working on that for six months."

EXPLORED IN PERSON.

"I have personally explored every one of the cañons from which we receive our water supply. The flow comes right down from the great snow-sheds. Finer water never ran on top of earth."

"I have personally measured the flow of those streams and have the fixtures of the United States government engineers who have been gauging the water supply of the valley for the Reclamation Bureau. When I left there

men affairs, but the expense of excavation will not be heavy as for railroad construction. We will simply give the water an opportunity to get its own way into the San Fernando Valley, just as it probably did a few thousand years ago without the aid of engineering."

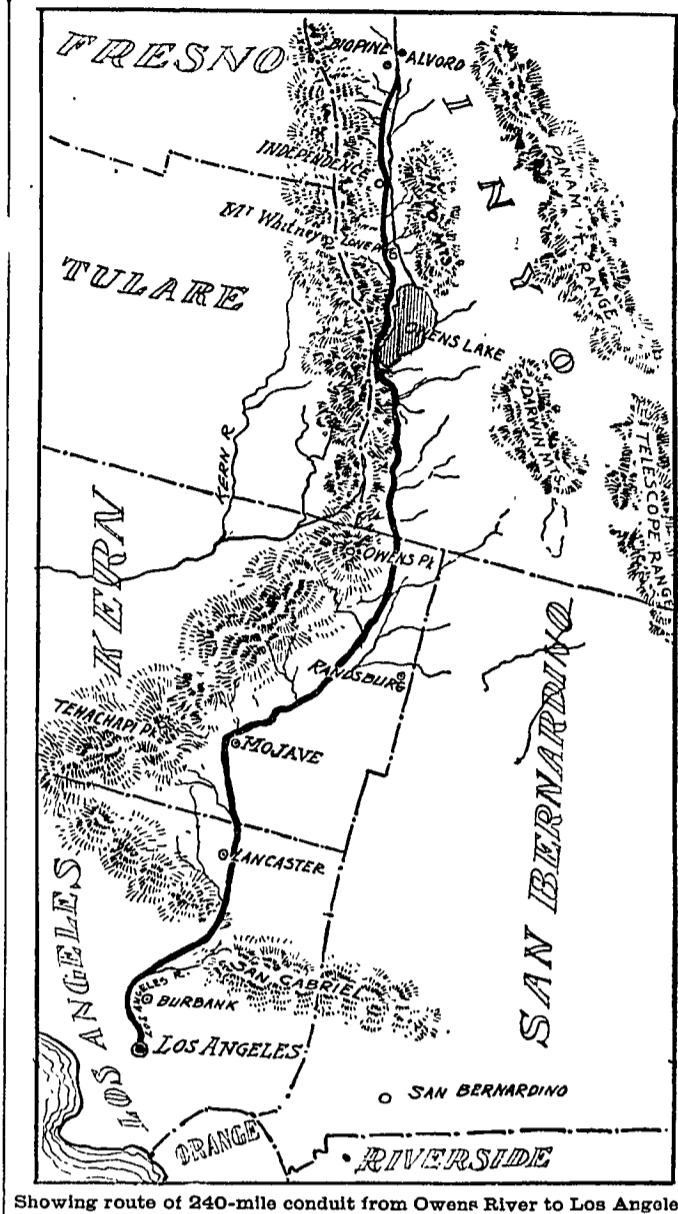
"It will be so great that by installing an artificial plant in the valley we can secure power enough to drive half a dozen of those turbines at the same time. This will mean a comparatively cheap method of construction."

"I have been over the ground carefully five times and I know whereof I speak when I say that we can complete the construction of that canal in four years."

"I regard the undertaking as too great, however, for the city to attempt it alone. The water obtained will be four or five times as much as we need for the domestic supply. I think that the city and county should join in bringing the water from the Owens River into the San Fernando Valley."

"USCAL OPPOSITION."

"I suppose there will be the usual opposition to this plan because the grafters have not been let in on it. Every option that has been secured has been



Showing route of 240-mile conduit from Owens River to Los Angeles.

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All this time Mr. Eaton has been busily engaged in getting options from the ranchers and cattle raisers throughout the length and breadth of the valley.

The number of schemes which these farmer folk put up on Mr. Eaton to induce him to buy grazing land that had little value was little else than a lava bed and a few trees that have grown out in Independence with the telling. That Eaton stood for them all and never got

won over to the never-ceasing wonders in the valley.

Superintendent Mulholland and the government engineers now tell many a merry tale of the deceptions that these simple folk worked upon themselves, fancying all the time that the joke was on Eaton. Some of them even went to the dozen or more ranches to the real object of their mission.

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THIRTY MILES OF TUNNELS.

"There will be about thirty miles of tunnel in the San Fernando Valley. I have estimated the aggregate cost of the construction of the tunnel to be \$21,000,000."

"We shall use no pipe, but expect to

bring the water here by a gravity flow

in a concrete conduit large enough to

carry 30,000 inches of water. The tun-

nels will make this possible."

"Some of those tunnels will be im-

(Continued on Seventh Page.)